

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212151

FOLLOWING REPEAT RPT LUANDA 0819 ACTION SECSTATE WASH D C
INFO KINSHASA LISBON BERN LUSAKA DATED 9/24/74.

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0819

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINT AO CG PO US
SUBJECT: CABINDAN NATIONALISM AND THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR A U.S.
POLICY DECISION

REF: A) STATE 196815; B) KINSHASA 7851; AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY. THE REACTIVATED AND EXPANDED CABINDAN LIBERATION FRONT (FRENTE DE LIBERACAO DO ENCLAVE DE CABINDA - "FLEC") ABSORBED TWO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN AUGUST, 1974 AND IS NOW THE ONLY POLITICAL GROUP ACTIVE IN CABINDA. FLEC LEADERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A HISTORIAL, LEGAL AND MORAL CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT CABINDA SEPARATE FROM ANGOLA. FLEC HAS THE SUPPORT OF MOST CABINDANS AND SEPARATIST SENTIMENT COULD REACH THE POINT WHERE THE U.S. WILL HAVE TO TAKE A PUBLIC STANCE ON THE ISSUE. WE PRESENT SOME CONSIDERATIONS AND A RECOMMENDATION FOR A POSSIBLE U.S. POLICY DECISION. END SUMMARY.

2. A CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER WENT TO CABINDA ON SEPT 16 TO TALK WITH FLEC FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT N'ZITA TIAGO AND OTHER FLEC LEADERS.
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WE HAVE ALSO DRAWN FOR THIS REPORT ON OUR LONG-STANDING CONTACTS WITH FLEC'S SOMEWHAT DISREPUTABLE BUT POWERFUL "SECRETARY OF DEFENSE," ALEXANDRE TATY AND PINHEIRO DA SILVA, NOW FLEC'S REPRESENTATIVE IN LISBON. PINHEIRO DA SILVA, A MESTICO, HAS HELD POSITIONS IN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER

APRIL 25 AND IS THE BEST KNOWN CABINDAN FIGURE. AS EMBASSY KINSHASA POINTS OUT (REF B) THE SENIOR CABINDAN SEPARATIST, RANQUE FRANQUE, IS NOT POPULAR IN CABINDA. NEITHER APPARENTLY IS FLEC PRESIDENT AUGUSTO TCHIOUFOU, WHO SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME IN BRAZZAVILLE.

3. FLEC IS A SINGLE ISSUE GROUP WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AMONG THE CABINDAN PEOPLE. THE TWO GROUPS IT RECENTLY ABSORBED, - THE DEMOCRATIC UNION OF CABINDAN PEOPLES AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CABINDA, - WERE POST-PORTUGUESE COUP CREATIONS AND THUS TOO SHORT-LIVED TO HAVE DEVELOPED ANY STRENGTH. THE MPLA FORCES OPERATING IN CABINDA OUT OF CONGO BRAZZAVILLE HAVE NEVER HAD SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT AMONG CABINDANS. THE FLEC LEADERSHIP IS MADE UP OF MEN OF DUBIOUS INTELLECTUAL HONESTY, BUT THEY HAVE LATCHED ON TO A POPULAR ISSUE AND HAVE NO COMPETITION, HENCE THEIR APPEAL. AS ITS NAME IMPLIES, FLEC IS A "FRONT" RATHER THAN A PARTY AND INCLUDES PEOPLE WHO DO NOT EASILY AGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER. HOWEVER, ALL FACTIONS OF FLEC AT THIS POINT SEEM STRONGLY COMMITTED TO THE NECESSITY OF WORKING TOGETHER UNTIL INDEPENDENCE. THE STRONG CABINDAN DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENT STATUS STEMS NOT ONLY FROM HISTORICAL AND ETHNIC FACTORS, BUT FROM THE SUSPICION THAT OIL REVENUES IN AN INDEPENDENT ANGOLA WILL REMAIN LARGELY IN LUANDA. FLEC LEADERS ENVISAGE A PROSPEROUS AND HAPPY FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR PEOPLE IF CABINDA CAN RETAIN ALL OF THE REVENUES.

4. ALL FLEC LEADERS FEEL THAT CABINDA IS A SEPARATE PORTUGUESE COLONY LIKE ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE AND GUINE BISSAU AND AS SUCH SHOULD RECEIVE ITS INDEPENDENCE AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. THEY REJECT THE IDEA THAT CABINDA IS HISTORICALLY OR LEGALLY A PART OF ANGOLA AND POINT OUT THAT NOWHERE IN THE 1885 TREATY OF SIMULAMBUCO IS ANGOLA MENTIONED. THEY CLAIM THAT THE ATTACHMENT OF THE TERRITORY TO LUANDA WAS SOLELY AN ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENIENCE THAT HAS NO LEGAL SIGNIFICANCE AND IS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE TREATY, WHICH PROMISES PORTUGUESE PROTECTION OF CABINDA AND LOCAL "TRADITIONAL" SELF-GOVERNMENT. ETHNICALLY, FLEC CLAIMS, CABINDA

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IS CLOSER TO BOTH ZAIRE AND CONGO BRAZZAVILLE THAN TO ANGOLA BUT DOES NOT WANT TO BECOME A PART OF EITHER NATION.

5. THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR FLEC IS HOW TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR ITS INDEPENDENCE DRIVE. FLEC'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ANGOLAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ARE NOT GOOD. AUGUSTINHO NETO OF MPLA AND HOLDEN ROBERT OF FNLA ARE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO AN INDEPENDENT CABINDA. DANIEL CHIPENDA OF MPLA, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN A MORE CONCILIATORY STANCE. ON SEPTEMBER ONE HE SIGNED A COMMUNIQUE IN BRAZZAVILLE WITH TCHIOUFOU WHICH STATES THAT "THE FUTURE OF CABINDA SHOULD BE FREELY DECIDED BY THE PEOPLE OF CABINDA THEMSELVES." THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO REFERS TO THE CREATION OF A MIXED COMMISSION TO STUDY THE BASES OF "THE FUTURE AND NECESSARY" COOPERATION BETWEEN CABINDA AND ANGOLA. THE PHRASING IS WEASELED

ENOUGH TO ALLOW CHIPENDA TO EXPLAIN THAT HE NEVER MEANT AN INDEPENDENT CABINDA. THE LATEST READING WE HAVE ON PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S ATTITUDE IS CONTAINED IN AN INTERVIEW HE GAVE EARLIER IN SEPTEMBER TO A REPORTER FROM NOTICIAS OF LUANDA. ZAIRE, MOBUTU IS QUOTED AS SAYING, IS SURROUNDED BY TEN COUNTRIES. HE INCLUDED CABINDA AND ANGOLA IN THAT LIST.

6. FLEC LEADERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE SOME SUPPORT IN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH NOT FROM FOREIGN MINISTER MARIO SOARES. A FLEC DELEGATION WILL LEAVE SHORTLY FOR LISBON TO LOBBY THE GROUP'S CAUSE AND HOPES ALSO TO ARGUE ITS CASE BEFORE THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY AND THE UNITED NATIONS.

7. GULF OIL CORPORATION, WITH OVER THIRTY OFFSHORE WELLS IN PRODUCTION, HAS A LARGE STAKE IN CABINDA. GULF EXECUTIVES HAVE BEEN IMPORTUNED BY CABINDAN LIBERATION LEADERS FOR SUPPORT OF ONE OR ANOTHER FACTION. MEANWHILE, ANGOLA LOOKS TO GULF REVENUES AS PART OF ITS PATRIMONY. GULF TELLS US THEY HAVE MADE THE DECISION TO REMAIN ABOVE EVEN THE SUSPICION OF FLIRTATION WITH ANY POLITICAL FACTION IN ANGOLA OR CABINDA. WHEN GULF REGIONAL PRESIDENT WYLLIE WAS HERE IN EARLY SEPTEMBER HE MADE A SPECIAL POINT OF TELLING JUNTA PRESIDENT ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO THAT GULF WAS CLEAN AND WAS DETERMINED TO STAY THAT WAY.

8. I HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT GULF'S GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT THE STAKES ARE HIGH. THE QUESTION OF WHAT HAPPENS TO CABINDA IS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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CONCERN TO THE USG AND WE MAY WANT TO ARRIVE AT A POLICY DECISION NOW IN ORDER TO AVOID DRIFTING LATER INTO A SITUATION THAT WILL BE AGAINST OUR BEST INTERESTS. SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS WOULD BE INVOLVED IN OUR EXAMINATION OF THE MATTER:

A) FLEC LEADERS CLAIM THAT IF MPLA PRESIDENT AUGUSTINHO NETO COMES TO POWER IN ANGOLA GULF HOLDINGS WILL BE NATIONALIZED. WE DOUBT THAT NETO IS GOING TO TAKE OVER ANGOLA IN THE SENSE THAT FLEC MEANS IT, NOR DO WE BELIEVE THAT THE BLACK MAJORITY GOVERNMENT THAT WILL EVENTUALLY RULE HERE WILL MOVE PRECIPITATELY AGAINST U.S. INVESTMENT, BUT THIS ASPECT DOES REQUIRE CLOSE ANALYSIS.

B) FLEC TELLS US THAT IF CABINDA IS HANDED TO ANGOLA ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, CABINDAN NATIONALISTS WILL MOUNT AN INSURGENCY CAMPAIGN TO GAIN THEIR FREEDOM AND IN THAT EVENTUALITY GULF'S INSTALLATIONS WILL BE ENDANGERED. THIS APPEARS TO US TO BE A NOT VERY SUBTLE FORM OF BLACKMAIL. (FLEC HAS USED POINTS (A) AND (B) TO ARGUE WITH US THAT IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO SUPPORT CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE.)

C) ZAIRE'S ATTITUDE IS CRITICAL TO THE FINAL OUTCOME. IT LOOKS FROM OUR LIMITED FIELD OF VIEW THAT ZAIRE, APART FROM THE

QUESTION OF OIL, WOULD PREFER A PARTITION OF CABINDA AND ANGOLA TO AVOID HAVING ONE NATION ATHWART ITS ACCESS TO THE SEA. IF ZAIRE DECIDES TO ACT IT HAS THREE MAIN OPTIONS: 1) ABSORB CABINDA; 2) BECOME THE PROTECTOR OF AN INDEPENDENT CABINDA; OR 3) INDUCE PORTUGAL AND/OR ANGOLA TO GIVE CABINDA A SPECIAL STATUS THAT WOULD ASSUAGE ZAIRIAN FEARS, WITH CABINDA REMAINING IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A CONFEDERATION WITH ANGOLA. THIS LAST SOLUTION WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE, BUT DOES NOT APPEAR OUT OF THE QUESTION. TWO CONSTRAINTS ON DIRECT ACTION BY ZAIRE ARE AFRICAN AND WORLD OPINION AND ZAIRE'S DEPENDENCE UPON ANGOLA'S BENGUELA RAILROAD. THE FLEC LEADERSHIP TOLD US THAT ZAIRE'S PRESIDENT MOBUTU IS NOT ANXIOUS TO ABSORB CABINDA, BECAUSE HE FEARS THAT COMBINING THE ETHNIC CABINDANS ALREADY IN ZAIRE WITH CABINDA ITSELF COULD CAUSE POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

D) PORTUGAL COULD DECIDE TO GIVE CABINDA ITS INDEPENDENCE IN RETURN FOR GUARANTEED ACCESS TO ITS OIL. THE GOP HAS DACLARED THAT CABINDA WILL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF AN INDEPENDENT ANGOLA, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT WE SHOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE OF HEART.

E) WHETHER OR NOT THE OAU AND OTHER BODIES SUPPORT THE CABINDAN SEPARATIST LEGAL ARGUMENTS WOULD ALSO BE A FACTOR IN THE U.S. POLICY DECISION.

9. I BELIEVE THAT OVERALL U.S. ECONOMIC ANDPOLITICAL INTERESTS WOULD BEST BE SERVED BY AN INDEPENDENT ANGOLA THAT INCLUDED CABINDA: OUR DEALINGS WITH THE AREA WOULD BE MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND LESS SUBJECT TO PROTEAN SHIFTS; ANGOLA WOULD BE OFF TO A GOOD START AND THE SIZE AND VARIETY OF HER ECONOMIC INTERESTS WOULD MAKE HER LEADERS MORE PRACTICAL IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT GULF MIGHT BE BETTER OFF IN AN INDEPENDENT CABINDA, BUT OUR LONG TERM INTERESTS WOULD APPEAR TO FAVOR A CABINDA ASSOCIATED IN SOME WAY WITH ANGOLA.

10. IF, IN FACT, WE PREFER THAT CABINDA FORM A PART OF ANGOLA, BUT TAKE NO ACTION TO FORESTALL THE SEPARATISTS, WE AND OTHERS MAY BE FORCED TO COME OUT PUBLICLY IN SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, THUS GIVING IMPETUS TO FLEC AND COMPLICATING AN ALREADY COMPLEX SITUATION. IF A POLICY DETERMINATION WERE MADE THAT RAN ALONG THE LINES I RECOMMEND, WE WOULD NEED TO TALK WITH MOBUTU AND THE PORTUGUE-

SE TO SEE IF WE CAN FIND COMMON GROUND.

11. I REALIZE I HAVE ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE PICTURE AND WELCOME CRITICAL COMMENTS FROM LISBON AND KINSHASA ON THE FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION.
KILLORAN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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